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The Coven at Pooh Corner

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This talk is designed to illustrate that spiritual significance is present in everything around us (see "Wicca and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: Children of Sekhmet, May 1988). On this occasion I shall be using for my inspiration the stories of that world famous writer A A Milne, to whit, Winnie the Pooh and The House at Pooh Corner. These are of course coded allegories of the spiritual development of a certain bear.

Firstly I would like to introduce the characters because there may be someone here not enlightened enough to have read these great works, in a similar sort of way as a Christian may not have read his Bible.

Our Hero. W T Pooh

Pooh, as he is known to his more intimate acquaintances, is a modest chap not known for his intellectual ability, and has been called "a bear of very little brain". He is given to composing hums well aware that being a bear his singing voice is not what it might be. I would think he is probably a Taurean and all in all a well rounded personality; possibly because it is always time for a little something.

Piglet

Piglet is a small timid little person, a very young spirit, and Pooh's best friend. He is a chattery soul who tends to dwell on his fears of heffelumps and woozles. It is generally thought he may be a Gemini and would be an extrovert if he could find more confidence. He has a peculiar aversion to being clean.

Wol

Wol has delusions of being the wise old owl based mainly on the fact that he can spell his name, which is OWL. He lives in the grandest house in the woods, the old oak tree. It is quite obvious to everyone that he is in fact Libran because he comes out with statements of fact which are more often than not wrong. All the other animals turn to him for advice, which he gives freely although no-one understands a word of it.

Eeyor

Eeyor is a very interesting character. He is a very, very old spirit who in this incarnation has come back as a donkey. Nothing much seems to bother him and he lives all alone in a boggy field. He is generally perceived to be miserable. This is wrong. He is quite happy in his own little world and is thought to be a Piscean with a Capricorn ascendant. He is in fact the most intellectual of them all because he can make the letter A out of three twigs. Also he has a brain whilst all the rest have grey fluff which has blown in by mistake.

Kanger

Kanger is a newcomer to the forest and something of a matriarch being very protective of her offspring, Roo. She is of course Cancerian, like my wife, and will mother everybody whether they like it or not.

Tigger

Tigger is the archetypal extrovert and obviously an Aries. Overwhelmingly friendly and bouncy. Piglet is terrified of him because he jumps out at you and says "WorraWorraWorra" in what he thinks is a friendly tone...He has no idea that he can't do something until after he has done it. He shows no trace of forethought and eventually is adopted by Kanger.

Christopher Robin

A small boy who will be fully explained at the end.

The Parables of Pooh

Down the Rabbit Hole

In this story, Pooh after breakfast of honey followed by honey, decides to go visiting. First he visits Piglet, and is just in time for a little something, i.e. a little honey. Eventually they go to Rabbit's place. Rabbit, who has hundreds and thousands of relations, naturally lives in a rabbit hole, where Pooh and Piglet are just in time for a little something. Pooh however eats too much and being a stoutish bear anyway, finds that when he leaves he gets stuck in the rabbit hole, with his feet dangling in Rabbit's living room and his head out in the air. Everyone comes to his aid, but no amount of pulling or pushing will shift him. Christopher Robin is summoned and decides that Pooh will have to stay there without honey until think enough to leave. Rabbit is obviously not well pleased about having a bear wedged in his front door. However he is compensated when he discovers that Pooh's legs make excellent towel rails.

Moral: From this escapade we can see that Pooh is not very spiritually developed. He is far too keen on the physical desires of the body and through this forced period of fasting and the altruistic use of his lower limbs, he learns that it is all right to be portly so long as you don't block someone's portal. In other words, you are at liberty to follow your own way so long as you do not block another's. This is the experience of the tarot card of The Devil. Deluded about the relative sizes of the door and his tummy, he cannot pass through until he has cast off the chains of his baser desires for honey. Most covens have a Pooh at this stage of development. This is the witch who overindulges in the communal wine during the rite, becomes comatose before the altar, and neither heaven, earth, or High Priestess's boot, can shift.

In which Pooh and Piglet go hunting heffalumps

One snowy day, Piglet finds Pooh staring at some footprints. Pooh thinks this may be a heffalump or maybe a woozle, and exhorts Piglet to come and follow it. Piglet is not keen. He agrees as long as Pooh is with him. Sometime later they notice that the footprints have been joined by another set, two heffalumps, or, as it may be, woozles! Pooh composes a hum to keep their spirits up, "How cold my nose, tiddly pom...". A little while later there are four sets of footprints. Piglet is getting frightened. They sit down for a think and eventually realize they are walking around a wood following their own footprints. So off they go for a little something.

Moral: Here we see Pooh's total lack of brilliance. He gets there in the end with a bit of help. On the other hand there is the immense faith he inspires in others. People feel safe with Pooh. He knows the value of a kind word and a cheery song. This also illustrates the danger of overwhelming others with your enthusiasm for a path, which may

not be the path they would choose. This is why in Wicca we are not evangelical. Each must find his or her own heffalump or woozle.

In Which Pooh Builds Eeyore a House

One rainy day Pooh sets out to find Piglet. After many hours of careful thought he has realized that everyone has a house except Eeyore, but he has a plan. On one side of the wood he has discovered a pile of sticks, so with Piglet's help they take the sticks around to the other side of the wood and build Eeyore a fine Des. Res. After some moments of contemplation of their labors, they set off to find Eeyore. They come across Eeyore in the approximate location of the pile of sticks looking puzzled. So they take him off to show him his new house. Eeyore is muttering but Pooh and Piglet take no notice whatsoever. They arrive at Eeyore's house and Pooh and Piglet say proudly, "There!". Eeyore looks pleased, but even more puzzled. It transpires that Eeyore built a house out of a pile of sticks on the other side of the wood. He puts down the change of location and certain architectural improvements to the high wind of the night before. Pooh and Piglet say nothing to Eeyore, and then Pooh says that he thinks it's "Time for a little something."

Moral: From this we can see that although still not devastatingly intelligent, Pooh has managed to perceive someone else's problem, and has made some attempt to solve it for them. It may however have been better if he had consulted Eeyore who had already gone about solving his problem for himself. Thus we see that we should not impose our particular perception of the universe on others. Fortunately Eeyore is of such greatness of spirit that he lets this event pass, and Pooh has developed sufficient maturity to let discretion be the better part of valor. As Eeyore was muttering perhaps we should also learn to listen to others.

The Great Flood

Pooh looks out one morning and sees that it is STILL raining. Christopher Robin has been getting concerned about the rising waters, measuring their progress with sticks. Each morning yesterday's stick has disappeared. He goes around and warns everyone to go to high ground. Pooh laboriously takes his stock of honey and balances all his jars on a high branch of a tree, where he takes refuge. When all his stock is exhausted he ponders for a while, then makes a not very successful boat out of a honey jar. The boat and Pooh have some disagreement as to whom should be on top. He eventually paddles this Craft over to Christopher Robin's house where they take to Christopher Robin's upturned umbrella. They then ensure that all the other animals are safe.

Moral: This story illustrates Pooh's growing concern for the environment and his fellow creatures. In this particular crisis, Pooh does not go off half cock making rash decisions, but seeks the help of the most developed spirit in the forest. Pooh exhibits great fortitude and determination in his quest for this higher spirit. Also he is showing better use of his baser desires, i.e. for honey. There are obvious parallels with numerous other flood myths although in this Wiccan version, having had our fill of our favorite tipple, the Ark mark 1A has some design faults. This is why in the world of today there aren't quite so many unicorns and other mythical beasts. They lost the argument with their honey pots.

What Tiggers Eat

Pooh, strolling through the woods, hears this peculiar noise: "WorraWorraWorra". He picks himself up, looks around and espies this strange creature. The creature bounces up and down and says, "Hello, I'm Tigger". Pooh, being a generous soul, asks him back for a little something. He asks Tigger what he would like to eat. Tigger doesn't know what he eats, so Pooh gives him some honey. Tigger is not impressed, so off they go to Piglet's house with Tigger bouncing along, running ahead of Pooh and leaping our at him in a very friendly fashion. When they arrive, Piglet gives him some acorns. Tigger does not like Acorns. So off they go to Eeyore's where Tigger tries thistles. Tigger definitely does not like thistles. Lastly they try Kanger. Kanger is very concerned, but doesn't know quite what to suggest. However, whilst giving malt extract to her baby Roo, Tigger bounces up and grabs the spoon and says "Mmmmmmm". So we find out what Tiggers eat.

Moral: This shows Pooh's ready acceptance of all types of people, even Aries! He goes to great lengths to help this very young spirit to find spiritual sustenance and someone willing to look after him. Kanger, as is the case with most Cancerians, does not believe they can solve the problem but in fact the solution is in their grasp all the time. Unfortunately, Kanger is now stuck with this waif and stray. Pooh has climbed a long way from the days when he got stuck in Rabbit's door, and has learnt the responsibility that goes with new initiates in our world.

N.B. Please note that in the true Pagan spirit of this tome, even Tiggers eat vegetarian food.

Pooh and the Honey Tree

On this day we find Pooh staring up into the branches of a tree. His highly tuned senses have detected honey. Being a portly bear he is none too good at climbing trees, so he comes up with a plan. Christopher Robin had a party with lots of balloons. So off he goes to Christopher Robin's house to ask if he might borrow a balloon. He also asks Christopher Robin to help him. They set off with Pooh's requirements. The balloon is painted black to look like a thundercloud, and blown up. Pooh, grasping the string, floats aloft. Christopher Robin stays beneath with his umbrella announcing "Tut tut, it looks like rain." The bees of course are not fooled for an instant. About this time Pooh discovers the major flaw in his plan. He cannot get down. After much careful thought, Christopher Robin shoots the balloon with his pop gun, and Pooh descends very rapidly and lands on a thistle. Eeyore considers this a waste of a good thistle.

Moral: This is the pinnacle of Pooh's intellectual development. He has solved his immediate problem, but not really thought out the consequences. In a spiritual sense, he has striven too far without being properly prepared and is brought back to earth with a bump. Pooh, having developed so far, has forgotten that if you are to go flying, astrally or not, then you must not forget your parachute. As Pooh found with the bees, we must learn not to underestimate life forms we perceive as being lower than ourselves. Eeyore is another case in point. Although he is seen as under-developed because he does not say much, he has obviously seen the outcome from the word go, and is only upset at the demise of a juicy thistle. Christopher Robin is obviously an interplanes adept since once again he rescues Pooh after having clairvoyantly foreseen the outcome.

Conclusion:

To lead up to my great revelation I must conclude the story. On frequent occasions when Pooh calls on Christopher Robin, he is out, but has left a note that he will be "BAK SON", and is nowhere to be seen. Pooh takes these notes to Wol, who is not sure if they refer to a herbaceous "Bakson" or a spotted "Bakson". One evening, Christopher Robin arrives at Pooh's house and reveals to Pooh that his time in this place is nearly over and he must go to school. He and Pooh have a long chat and Christopher Robin decides that Pooh is ready to accompany him on this great adventure and they walk off hand in hand into the Sun.

This illustrates the basic fact of life that no matter how comfortable we are we must be prepared to grow and develop and move on when we must. Christopher Robin is in fact Pooh's Higher Self and as can be seen from the stories, unless you use your Higher Self you will not reach your desired aims, and indeed may go the same way as the unicorns and their honey pots. Between Christopher Robin and Pooh they have achieved sufficient development to leave their current plane and move on to higher things. Christopher Robin, as can be seen from his name, Christ/Robin, is a Tipherathic aspect of Pooh; i.e. the center where the lower and higher self come together. When they have united the way is open and clear for them to move on to the next sphere of existence.

Thus it should be every witch's ambition to be reincarnated as a bear of very little brain who lives in the hundred acre wood on a plane at least one above this one. After all the idiots we see running this world have to be seen as a damn sight more stupid than even Wol. (PS Mrs Thatcher is also a Libran!)

David Wadsworth, who has been a bear of little brain for many a long year!

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